

plemented by cinematic instruction. What is needed now is not so much technical advances in the production of films as hard thinking and experiment to determine how best to integrate the film with the rest of the apparatus of medical education. Unfortunately the older teachers seem more concerned with the politics of the Goodenough report—the fate of the colleges, the role of the municipal hospitals, and the placement of women students—than with improving the technique of education; and we may have to wait for the younger generation to return from the wars before we can get radical changes in medical teaching.

TERMINOLOGY IN MALARIA

For some time terminology in malaria, especially that relating to the epidemiology of this disease, has been in need of revision and standardization to bring it into line with modern conceptions and usage, and, so far as possible, to attain uniformity and precision in the meaning of terms employed by workers of different countries. The Health Section of the League of Nations shortly before the war appointed a committee to consider the standardization of terminology in malaria, and its report has been published. Further, in this number of the *Journal*, Mr. Francis Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, contributes an article on the generic and specific names of the malignant tertian and quartan malaria parasites. These documents provide a clear and useful review of the subject. The report of the Health Section of the League of Nations consists of two parts—a commentary and a glossary of precise definitions. The commentary outlines the chief facts of malaria and its epidemiology, indicates the terms in use, and explains why some of them should be retained or improved upon. A suggestion welcome to the practical worker is that the expressions *vivax* malaria or infection, *falciparum* malaria or infection, etc., should be employed in place of such clumsy and archaic names as “simple tertian,” “benign tertian,” and the like. The full explanation of what is meant and implied by various indices in use, the treatment of the problems connected with endemicity, and the guidance to the nomenclature of species and varieties of anopheles, should all help to achieve precision and uniformity.

The correct names of the malaria parasites have long been a matter of controversy, and it is here that the communication from the Secretary to the Commission on Zoological Nomenclature promises a satisfactory solution. The names *praecox*, *immaculatum*, *tropica*, and *falciparum* claimed by their respective upholders as carrying priority are none of them seemingly the correct name of the malignant tertian parasite judged by strictly zoological standards. Yet by a sort of irony of error it is impossible now to apply the correct name either to the malignant tertian or to the quartan parasite, because the correct specific name for the malignant tertian parasite cannot be anything else but *malariae*—the name given to it by Laveran, who first described this parasite; the very name that for nearly half a century by reason of an early error has, through a vast literature, been incorrectly used to designate the quartan parasite. It is unthinkable that a change could now be made, and fortunately in such cases the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature has power to rectify matters by suspending the rules, if necessary, to validate names currently in use. That it is proposed, as will be seen from the Secretary's communication, to exercise these powers will be generally welcomed.

HOUSING THE ROYAL COLLEGES

An article on another page briefly tells the story, so far as it has gone up to now, of the project to bring together on a common site in the middle of London the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Surgeons, and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Letters printed in the *Times* last week have put the idea into the foreground. This is a matter of great interest and importance to medicine, and it should have free discussion. The attitude of the R.C.S. is clear and has been openly stated in the annual report. At the annual meeting of Fellows and Members on Nov. 16 the President said, with regard to the rebuilding of the College and the proposal to build the other Royal Colleges on adjacent sites, that the possibilities of building elsewhere had been explored, but the manifest advantages of the site in Lincoln's Inn Fields seemed to outweigh them. Nevertheless the Council of the R.C.S. has said it is prepared to make big sacrifices if convinced that a move is necessary for the promotion of better relations or facilities between the three corporations. It may be supposed that the R.C.O.G. would welcome removal from its house in Queen Anne Street to the large site on the south side of Lincoln's Inn Fields. More than fifteen years ago the R.C.P. decided that its building in Pall Mall East and Trafalgar Square, which opened in 1825 when the College moved from Warwick Lane in the City of London, was unsuited for its purpose and that a new home should be sought. By 1934 negotiations for the sale of the Trafalgar Square site to the Canadian Government for the enlargement of Canada House were nearly complete, but had to be broken off. In recent years the Standing Joint Committee of the three Colleges came to the unanimous conclusion that the securing of a single site was more important than the qualities of any particular site. Meanwhile the R.C.S. has acquired new ground in Lincoln's Inn Fields large enough to accommodate the needs of all three Colleges as well as a number of the major specialties. A factor which must carry weight with the Fellows of the R.C.P., on whom rests the responsibility of decision, is that, in Lord Dawson's words, “the present Canadian Government is still wishful, subject to negotiation, to purchase the R.C.P. building.” The scheme for adjacent College buildings in Lincoln's Inn Fields may be both practicable and desirable from the point of view of the R.C.P.: it certainly deserves early and careful consideration. There would seem to be much to gain and little to lose if consultants and specialists were topographically conjoined in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

An intensive sight-saving campaign promoted by the National Institute for the Blind is opening in 1945. Already the rehabilitation work of the Institute has brought the light of a fuller life to those who labour in physical darkness. Recently the County Councils Association and the Association of Municipal Associations requested the Institute to prepare a minimum scheme of ophthalmological research, which has been adopted, and presently it is expected that the major local authorities will be invited to support it. Meanwhile, Oxford University Medical School resolved upon establishing a research centre with Miss Ida Mann at its head. That department has already done promising work. A fund was opened a year ago, and £100,000 has been received from voluntary sources, mainly industrial. Sir James Marchant, who has been promoting the Oxford Fund, has now been invited by the Prevention of Blindness Committee of the N.I.B. to undertake the founding of a central fund from

which the centres in London, Leeds, and Manchester will largely profit. The results of these research centres will be co-ordinated, and it is confidently expected that in a generation blindness will be much reduced. Writing on this campaign for 1945 Sir James reminds us that ophthalmology as a university subject involves the co-ordinated study of the dominant sense in man in all its aspects—evolutionary, developmental, physiological, psychological, and pathological. The demand for research in industry and medicine is not merely a matter for technical experts: it is a new venture in human thought. He asks that his appeal should not be regarded as a mere matter of charity; it is a business proposition which will pay a handsome dividend. The present aim is to raise £1,000,000. He is to be found at 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1, or Lenthay Lodge, Sherborne, Dorset.

SCIENTIFIC CO-OPERATION WITH CHINA

Anyone who thinks about China must reflect that famine and disease, both before and during the Sino-Japanese War, have taken a far greater toll of the lives of Chinese babies than have Japanese bombs. It is remarkable that China, after a war of such duration and under such conditions, has continued to manifest even a show of resistance. If sympathy for China is to have value it must be based on a correct interpretation of China's needs. The material aid that can be given to China will continue to be limited by the general war situation, and such is the state of communications that Chinese scientific workers have been cut off from scientific and technical journals and have therefore been unable to follow the progress of science in the West. Some of the barriers to a flow of information on scientific matters between this country and China have recently been discussed in *Nature* and in an article by Dr. Joseph Needham, F.R.S., in the same journal.^{1 2}

Dr. Needham is director of the British Council Cultural Scientific Office in Chungking. The story of the development of this office is told in the Report of the British Council for 1943-4.³ Dr. Needham arrived in February, 1943, and immediately embarked upon an exacting programme of visits, discussion, and lectures which involved extensive travel under difficult conditions and no little physical hardship. By February, 1944, he had visited over 100 Chinese scientific institutions. Within a few weeks of his arrival he had submitted to the British Ambassador a detailed memorandum which led to the formation of the British Council scientific office which he now directs. Dr. Needham was later joined by Dr. Dorothy Needham, also a distinguished biochemist, and the services of Prof. William Band, a physicist, were loaned by Yenching University, Peiping. More recently Dr. L. E. R. Picken, a Cambridge zoologist, joined the staff in Chungking. Both Dr. J. Needham and Dr. Picken have, in addition to their scientific attainments, been students of the Chinese language and culture for some years.

A few weeks ago Dr. A. G. Sanders, of the Sir William Dunn School of Pathology, Oxford, one of Sir Howard Florey's team of workers on penicillin, arrived in Chungking as medical adviser to the British Council office for a period of not less than one year. Dr. Sanders has had experience both as a clinician and as a laboratory worker, and although he will be concerned with the supply of information on a wide range of medical subjects, his ability to speak as an expert on penicillin—and, particularly, on its non-industrial production with improvised equipment—may have practical significance.

It is satisfactory to note that the *British Medical Journal* is one of many scientific periodicals which the British Council is now sending regularly by air-mail on microfilm. Copies of the journals themselves are necessarily sent by a slower and more uncertain route. Since the establishment of the scientific office in Chungking it has been possible also to meet many requests for books and reprints. It is to be hoped that these efforts will be accepted in China as an expression of the desire of British medical and other scientific workers to offer the fullest collaboration to their Chinese colleagues and to help them to endure for yet a little while that unhappy isolation which circumstances have thrust upon them.

PHARMACOPOEIAL POLICY

The Seventh Addendum to the *British Pharmacopoeia*, 1932, shows a continuation of the progressive policy of the Pharmacopoeia Commission. Among the additions are benzedrine under the pharmacopoeial name of amphetamine, cyclopropane, zinc-protamine-insulin, nembutal under the name of soluble pentobarbitone, and all the sulphonamides with the exception of sulphasuxidine and sulphamezathine. It is interesting that gratus strophanthin (or ouabain) has been included. This is a crystalline strophanthin of constant activity, and it remains to be seen whether doctors will use it more than they have the *kombé* strophanthin, which is already included. The potency of the *kombé* strophanthin was ensured by a biological standardization. Since the introduction of digoxin the profession appears to have neglected the use of strophanthin for injection, though it has considerable value as a heart tonic.

The Addendum contains a large number of monographs for various tablets. Codeine phosphate appears in the *B.P.* not merely as codeine phosphate but also as *tabellae codeinae phosphatis*, so that each tablet contains not less than 87.5% or more than 110.5% of the prescribed or stated amount: the manufacturer, in making a large batch of tablets by mixture with an excipient, will have to take care that the distribution of the codeine is reasonably uniform in the mixture. Tablets are now official for several barbiturates, sulphonamides, antipyretics, vitamin preparations, and other substances. Provision is made for those doctors who do not state what dose the tablet is to contain, by a statement of what is to be dispensed. "Soluble thiopentone" is another addition of interest, though few will recognize pentothal under this description: the Addendum does not indicate that soluble thiopentone and pentothal are one and the same thing. The *Pharmacopoeia* would help its readers if it published proprietary names as synonyms or else as the names of substances having a very similar action. A large New York hospital recently instructed its dispensary to supply, for all proprietary articles ordered for patients, the equivalent products described in the *United States Pharmacopoeia*; this saved the hospital no less than £12,500 in one year—which shows there is something in a name after all. Dispensers in British hospitals might take a hint, and teachers of clinical medicine might set their housemen an example by eschewing the use of proprietary names when official terms exist: it should be quite simple to call sulphanilamide by its name instead of by one of the numerous fancy terms politely called synonyms.

Prof. G. Grey Turner will deliver the Hunterian Oration before the Royal College of Surgeons of England on Wednesday, Feb. 14. His subject is "The Hunterian Museum: Yesterday and To-morrow."

¹ *Nature*, 1944, **154**, 649.

² *Ibid.*, p. 657.

³ *Report of the British Council 1943-1944*, 1944, 3, Hanover Street, London.